

West Loop

Located between the Central Loop and Near West, the West Loop is bounded on the north mainly by Kinzie Street, on the south by Congress Parkway, on the east by the South Branch of the Chicago River, and on the west by the Kennedy Expressway.

The West Loop includes a portion of the core office market area as well as residential buildings and supporting retail uses. Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center have made the West Loop a gateway to Chicago for tourists, suburban commuters and other visitors.

WEST LOOP



Image WL-1: A West Loop condominium conversion.



Image WL-2: The ABN/Amro Building at 540 West Madison was one of many new office structures in the West Loop.



Image WL-3: A redevelopment proposal for the Old Post Office would add hotel and office space.

Trends, 2000-2007

The West Loop's 2000 Census population of 4,884 grew to an estimated 9,196 by 2007, which represents about 6% of Central Area households.

The West Loop was the most active district for office development aside from the Central Loop. Between 2000 and 2007, over 3.9 million SF of office space was developed in the West Loop, nearly all of it directly west of the Chicago River. For example, a number of new office buildings were built in the 500 block of various West Loop streets: a building at 555 West Adams contains 480,000 SF, Quaker Oats moved to a new 425,000-SF headquarters at 555 West Monroe, ABN/Amro built a 1.3 million-SF property at 540 West Madison and CTA headquarters moved to a LEED-certified building at 567 West Lake Street.

Forecast, 2008-2020

An additional 3.5 million SF of new office space is currently proposed for the West Loop. Two of the proposed projects, the expansion of Union Station and the renovation of the Old Main Post Office, include plans for hotels and new office space. Seven sites identified as vacant or underutilized could support an additional 4.7 million SF of new office use.

A proposed retail project (Metra Market) at Ogilvie Transportation Center and a Jewel grocery store in the Kinzie Station planned development are bringing new stores and restaurants to serve residents, commuters and office workers in the West Loop.

2020 Vision/Goals

- The West Loop will continue to grow as an increasingly important location for office development, which is the engine for economic and employment growth in the Central Area.
- High development densities and a strong preference for job generating uses should accompany the substantial new investment in West Loop transportation projects.

- Clinton Street will become the focal corridor of this dense, walkable office core, with office development concentrated between Randolph and Jackson Streets.
- Residential areas such as the Fulton River district and the Jackson Loft district will maintain their distinctive character.
- The West Loop will strengthen its position as a transportation gateway into the Central Area, adding faster, more direct public transitway connections to other Central Area districts as well as increased Metra service into Ogilvie Transportation Center.
- The West Loop will feature an enhanced streetscape that improves the pedestrian environment for commuters, residents, visitors, and tourists.

Policies & Actions

Financial / Incentive

- The River West, Canal Street/Congress Expressway, LaSalle Central and Kinzie Industrial Corridor TIFs can help fund infrastructure and transit projects that benefit the West Loop.
- Local improvement districts could be established to support neighborhood activities and selected capital projects.

Regulatory

- High-density office buildings with complementary commercial uses should be encouraged as the highest and best economic use for development sites in the West Loop.
- The Downtown Core zoning category, which covers a portion of the West Loop, should designate residential uses as a Special Use and increase the minimum lot area (MLA) for residential uses.

Development

- Integrate open space and Riverwalk enhancements in development projects along the Chicago River.

WEST LOOP

Urban Design

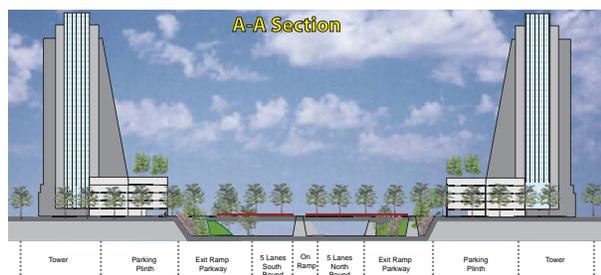
Kennedy Corridor

The area along the Kennedy Expressway from Van Buren to Lake Street was studied in order to identify opportunities for pedestrian and vehicular mobility improvements, development considerations for expressway adjacent parcels and potentials for park development.

Urban design recommendations for this corridor include the following (see Figure WL-1 and Figure WL-2 below):

- Pedestrian safety and comfort enhancements are recommended for the sidewalks along the bridges that span the expressway. Sidewalk widths can be expanded utilizing a cantilever system on existing piers. An expanded sidewalk would provide space for planters with trees or other landscape material to serve as a buffer between pedestrians and automobiles (see discussion of streetscape improvements under West Loop Projects).
- Pedestrian crossing of ramp intersections is a key safety concern. Improvements in crosswalk striping and utilization of an audible warning system were identified as features warranting further study.
- Landscape enhancements have been installed in several areas along the expressway, particularly at on- and off-ramp locations. This program should be continued and expanded.
- Regarding development along expressway adjacent parcels, a rational massing strategy has identified. Recommendations include utilization of parking plinths to establish regulating lines along the corridor and step-backs in building mass to frame the corridor.

Figure WL-1: Kennedy Corridor Section Detail



West Loop Projects

(see project map, following page)

1. Carroll Avenue Transitway

This new transit corridor would connect the West Loop with River North and Streeterville via a dedicated east-west right-of-way at the north edge of the Chicago River. In the West Loop, the service would operate in the dedicated right-of-way north of Lake Street, and use Clinton and Canal to access Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

2. Clinton Transitway

An extension of the dedicated transit corridor used by the Carroll Avenue Transitway, the Clinton Transitway would create a below-grade transit right-of-way from Lake Street to Jackson Street. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

3. East-West Transitway

An east-west rapid transit route through the Central Loop beneath Monroe Street will connect the West Loop and its commuter rail stations with the Central Loop and lakefront amenities. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

4. West Loop/Union Station Area Streetscape

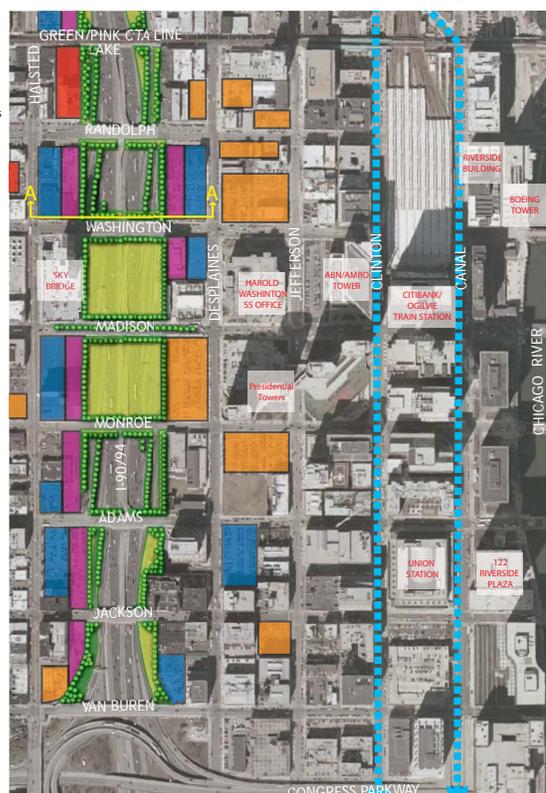
The area around Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center has heavy foot traffic and demands a pedestrian-friendly environment. A comprehensive streetscape project on adjacent streets, particularly Clinton and Canal and their intersecting east-west streets from Randolph to Jackson, would add street plantings, crosswalks, lighting and wayfinding signage. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

5. Bicycle Lanes & Markings

Bicycle lanes are planned for Washington, Madison and Adams, complementing the existing bicycle lanes along Clinton and Canal. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

- Existing Bike Path
- Pending Developments
- Proposed Developments
- Opportunity Sites
- Landscape Improvements
- Parking Plinth

Figure WL-2: Kennedy Corridor Urban Design



WEST LOOP



Image WL-4: A series of investments will improve Union Station access and passenger facilities, as well as the ability to transfer between transit services.



Image WL-5: West Loop Transportation Center will connect the commuter rail, CTA rail, and bus services that converge in the West Loop.



Image WL-6: The Riverfront system will be improved with additional connections north and south.

6. Union Station Upgrades

Union Station improvement needs include enhanced access points and upgraded passenger amenities and platforms. An intermodal transfer center will move buses and taxis off the street and ease congestion. Amtrak also plans to improve and expand its passenger waiting areas. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

7. West Loop Transportation Center

The creation of a below-grade intermodal center beneath Clinton Street would connect future service corridors such as the Clinton Subway and Transitway with existing assets such as Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

8. Clinton Subway

In the West Loop, the Clinton Street Subway will be generally located beneath Clinton Street, with potential stations located at Congress and Monroe. The Monroe station would be part of the multi-level West Loop Transportation Center. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

9. South Branch Riverfront

In the West Loop, portions of the continuous Riverwalk exist at street level, but additional sections must be completed. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

10. Kennedy Corridor Enhancements

Multi-phased I-90/94 Kennedy Corridor enhancements are proposed along the east/west corridors that connect the West Loop to the Near West subdistricts. Improvements include pedestrian safety and comfort features on the east/west road segments that cross the Expressway and the addition of trees and landscape features along the ramp infrastructure. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

11. Kennedy Corridor Cap

The creation of a major public park over the Kennedy Expressway is proposed for the area between Monroe and Washington Streets. This cap would provide much-needed green space to serve office and adjacent residential development and would provide improved linkage between the West Loop and Near West subdistricts. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

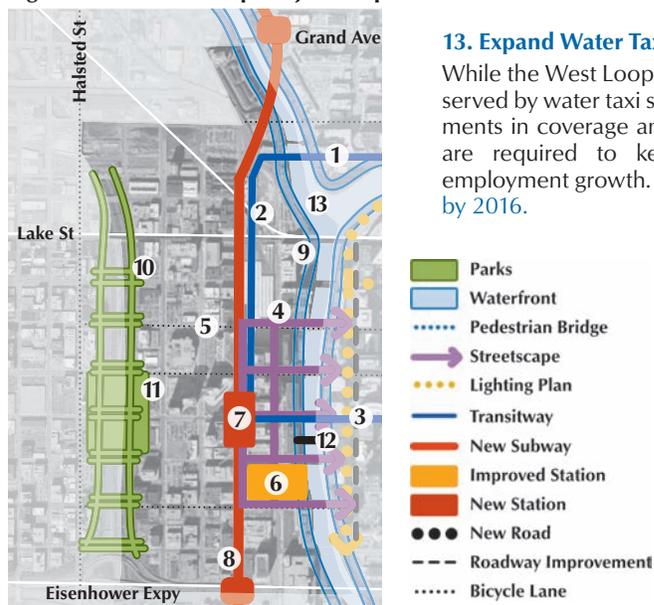
12. Pedestrian Bridge over River

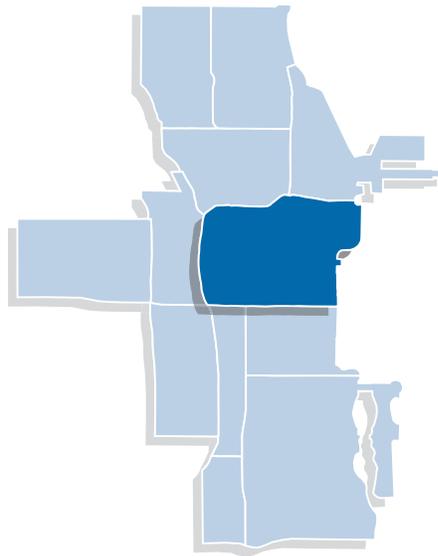
A dedicated pedestrian bridge connecting the West Loop to the Central Loop (over the Chicago River) would ease pedestrian congestion on the streets. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

13. Expand Water Taxi Service

While the West Loop is currently well served by water taxi service, improvements in coverage and service levels are required to keep pace with employment growth. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

Figure WL-3: West Loop Project Map





Central Loop

The Central Loop is located in the heart of the Central Area and is bounded on the north by the Chicago River, on the south by Congress Parkway, on the east by Lake Michigan, and on the west by the South Branch of the Chicago River.

The Central Loop is the economic engine for the Central Area, containing the core office market along with retail, hospitality/entertainment, institutional, and residential uses. The western half contains the major portion of the core office submarket. The eastern portion of the Central Loop is anchored by Millennium Park, Grant Park and historic Michigan Avenue. Between the two is the State Street retail corridor and the LaSalle Street financial district.

CENTRAL LOOP



Image CL-1: The south Wacker Drive Corridor has become the premier location for new office development.



Image CL-2: Grant Park and the lakefront harbors are enduring trademarks of the City.



Image CL-3: The Heritage at 130 N Garland overlooks Millennium Park, and is one example of the trend toward residential uses in the eastern areas of the Loop.

Trends, 2000-2007

The Central Loop added 7.2 million SF to its office inventory between 2000 and 2007, with an additional 3 million SF under construction and planned. Wacker Drive solidified its position as a premier office address, with additions including the Hyatt Center, UBS Tower, 151 North Wacker, 191 North Wacker, and 111 South Wacker.

Millennium Park was completed in 2004 and has had an enormous stimulating impact on the residential and hotel development sectors. While the Central Loop contained about 6.7% of Central Area households in 2000, virtually all lived in the portion of the Central Loop that is east of Michigan Avenue. The number of households doubled from 4,455 in 2000 to 9,091 in 2007. The 356-unit Heritage and the 355-unit Legacy led the new construction growth sparked by Millennium Park.

With Millennium Park drawing over 3.5 million visitors annually, the Central Loop captured roughly 30% of new hotel development activity in the Central Area between 2000 and 2007, including two major adaptive-use projects: the 385-room Hard Rock Hotel and the 128-room Hampton Inn at the renovated Bank of America Theater.

Development on North State Street included student housing for the School of the Art Institute, new retail space, and the Gene Siskel Film Center. The Theater District expanded with the addition of the new Goodman Theater, the Joffrey Center at State and Randolph, and the renovation of the former Schubert Theater, which became the Bank of America Theater. The State Street Corridor attracted new retailers and saw the return of Sears department store at State and Madison.

Forecast, 2008-2020

Ten Central Loop sites identified as vacant or underutilized could support nearly 9 million SF of new office space. With the expansion of the Federal Campus onto State, another 1.5 million SF will be added and both public- and private-sector employment will increase.

The upcoming completion of 108 North State (Block 37) with 400,000 SF of retail, restaurant, and entertainment, along with the re-tenanting of the historic Carson Pirie Scott building, will boost State Street retail.

The Wit Hotel at State and Lake is currently under construction, and several other hotel projects are planned or proposed for the Central Loop, including adaptive re-use projects in vintage properties on South LaSalle Street. The Children's Museum proposes to relocate from Navy Pier to a site at the north end of Grant Park, and the Art Institute is expanding with a new 265,000-SF wing, adding attractions adjacent to Millennium Park.

Several new residential towers were completed or are in development in the 28-acre, 4,950-unit Lakeshore East planned development. A new public park, public school and on-site retail center are also among the existing and planned amenities.

While new residential buildings are under construction or planned, additions to the supply will slow until economic recovery occurs.

CENTRAL LOOP

2020 Vision/Goals

- The Central Loop is the economic center of the Central Area, the City, and the entire metropolitan region. To continue to thrive, it requires a dense walkable office core that is well served by a reliable, high-capacity transit system that prioritizes use of public transportation.
- Newer office development will be concentrated along Wacker Drive with most of the competitive inventory located west of Dearborn Street.
- LaSalle Street will continue to function as a prime corridor for financial services, and its vintage buildings will provide opportunities for renovation and adaptive-reuse developments.
- A merged Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) and Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) will be headquartered at LaSalle Street and Jackson Boulevard and will encourage reinvestment along Jackson and Van Buren in the southern portion of the Central Loop.
- Residential development will continue, as older buildings are recycled, infill sites are identified and Lakeshore East completes its build out. Access to and views of Millennium and Grant Parks will be the amenities that draw developers and residents.
- Higher education institutions will continue to add facilities, students and programs that build upon an already strong presence in the Central Loop.
- The three-block section of Michigan Avenue from Randolph to the Chicago River has little identity, despite its important role as a connection between the vibrant Magnificent Mile and Millennium Park. The City should give further considerations to recent recommendations for invigorating this vital link from a technical assistance panel of the district council of the Urban Land Institute.

Policies & Actions

Financial / Incentive

- The LaSalle Central TIF that was established in 2006 ties together older, existing TIF districts, providing an important funding tool for building renovations, transit projects, and street improvements.
- Special Service Areas can supplement other sources of funds for activities, services and select capital projects. Central Loop contains Special Service Area #1 along State Street, which extends between East Wacker Drive and Congress Parkway and is serviced by The Chicago Loop Alliance.

Regulatory

- The portion of the Central Loop zoned Downtown Core provides floor area ratios (FARs) that appropriately encourage the highest densities in the Central Area.
- The Downtown Core zoning category should be revised to emphasize preference for employment-generating uses over residential uses by designating residential as a Special Use and by increasing the minimum lot area (MLA) for residential uses.
- Historic preservation designations in the Central Loop should be used judiciously to balance redevelopment and renovation, particularly in the LaSalle Street corridor.

Development

- While high-density office development should be concentrated west of Dearborn, the area east of Dearborn should continue to be a vibrant mix of institutional, residential, hotel, entertainment and retail uses.
- Recycling older office buildings for small office users, hotels and residences should be encouraged.
- Development of new higher educational facilities, including student activity centers, classrooms, dormitories and administrative offices, should be supported and assisted as needed.

Urban Design



Image CL-4: Millennium Park draws more than 3.5 million visitors each year to see its attractions.



Image CL-5: The Lakeshore East residential area surrounds a major new park space.



Image CL-6: Millennium Station replaced the old Randolph Station as the terminal of the Metra Electric and South Shore lines.

CENTRAL LOOP



Image CL-7: The bicycle station and rental facility at Millennium Park is accessible from upper Randolph.



Image CL-8: The Randolph corridor frames Grant and Millennium Parks and connects the Lakefront with the rest of the Central Loop.

Signature Street – East Randolph

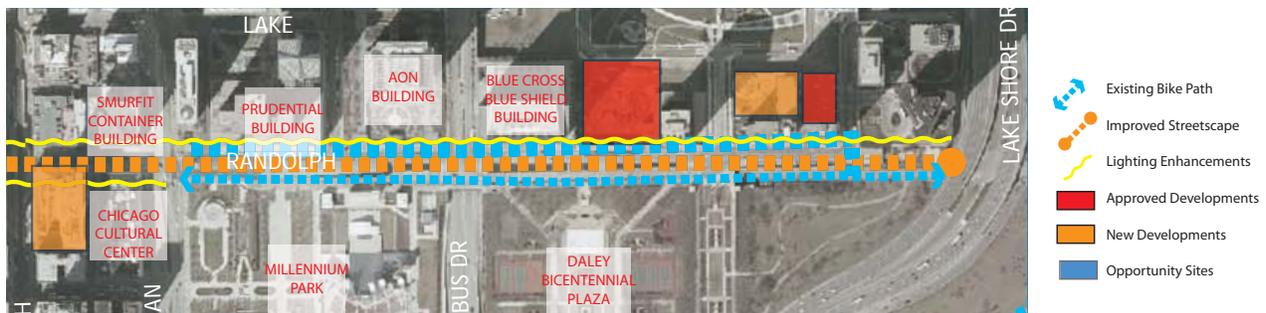
Randolph Street east of Michigan Avenue is a major connection between Lake Shore Drive and the Central Loop and should be improved. The visibility of this street and its arterial transportation role within downtown has been elevated by the development of Millennium Park and adjacent office and residential towers. With its drop-off function for Harris Theater and the proposed Children’s Museum further east, pedestrian use of Randolph Street is significant and on the rise.

Urban design recommendations for this corridor include the following (see Figure CL-1 below):

- Streetscape improvements are needed to improve the safety and appearance of this high visibility corridor (see specific Streetscape recommendations under Central Loop Projects).
- A pedestrian ramp is proposed on the south side of Randolph to establish pedestrian access from the elevated section of East Randolph to the ground at Lake Shore Drive. This connection would bridge a disconnect between development north of Randolph and access to Millennium Park, Grant Park and the Lakefront.

Signature Street – Congress

Figure CL-1: East Randolph Urban Design Recommendations



CENTRAL LOOP

Parkway

The role and function of Congress Parkway is changing due to the development of student housing at University Center, high levels of market rate residential development in adjacent areas of the South Loop, and expanding office functions in the area associated with the financial industry and government services. Congress Parkway needs to be upgraded to accommodate high levels of pedestrian mobility while also maintaining its role as a key east/west vehicular arterial. Development proposals for areas immediately south of Congress along the Chicago River will further increase pedestrian traffic.

Urban design recommendations for this corridor include the following (see Figure CL-2 below):

- Congress Parkway streetscape enhancements should include strategies to buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic and provide safer intersection crossing conditions.
- Specialized lighting improvements should enhance the nighttime pedestrian environment through this corridor.
- A new gateway feature should be added for travelers entering or exiting the Loop business district at Grant Park.



Image CL-9: The new University Center has increased pedestrian activity along Congress Parkway.



Figure CL-2: Congress Parkway Urban Design Recommendations



CENTRAL LOOP



Image CL-10: The East-West Transitway beneath Monroe would allow for faster trips across the Central Loop.



Image CL-11: The Washington-Wabash Elevated station would replace two existing stations.



Image CL-12: A lighting enhancement project along Michigan Avenue will highlight the wall of buildings that frame Grant Park.

Central Loop Projects

(see project map below right)

1. East-West Transitway

This east-west rapid transit route through the Central Loop beneath Monroe Street will enhance access between the West Loop Metra terminals and the employment, entertainment, educational and residential uses throughout the Central Loop. The service will also connect to the Lakefront parks and the planned Lakefront Transitway. **Implementation goal: Complete by 2016.**

2. CTA Station Modernization

The station modernization program has improved numerous aged stations in the Central Loop. Additional subway and elevated stations in the Central Loop are planned for improvements under this program:

- Madison/Monroe (Red)
- Washington/Dearborn (Blue)
- Washington/Wabash (Loop El)
- State/Lake (Loop Elevated)
- Monroe/Dearborn (Blue)
- LaSalle/Congress (Blue)

A new Washington/Wabash station is envisioned to replace the two existing elevated Loop stations at Randolph and Madison. If possible, funding for both elevated and subway station upgrades should be accelerated. **Goal: Complete all by 2020.**

3. East Randolph Streetscape

A comprehensive streetscape program is needed to enhance the visual character of Randolph Street east of Michigan Avenue. Enhancement recommendations include establishment of wider sidewalks, new street lighting, landscape, and wayfinding signage (particularly connecting the Loop to Millennium and Grant Parks). **Goal: Complete all by 2012.**

4. Congress Parkway Streetscape

The streetscape project on Congress (currently being designed) will improve the pedestrian environment in the important east-west thorough-

fare along the south edge of the Central Loop. Congress connects Grant Park, a concentration of universities, new residential developments in the vicinity and Metra's LaSalle Street Station. Streetscape elements include trees, planted medians, new lighting fixtures, improved crosswalks and specialized light displays. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

5. Wacker Drive Reconstruction

The reconstruction of the north/south segment of Wacker Drive south of Lake Street would improve traffic operations, pedestrian amenities, and aesthetics in an active office development corridor. This project would continue the work completed along the east-west section of Wacker Drive, which added amenities along the Chicago Riverfront. **Goal: Complete all by 2012.**

6. Bicycle Lanes & Markings

New bicycle lanes are planned for Washington and Madison to complement the existing bicycle lane along Upper Randolph near Millennium Park. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

7. Lighting Enhancements

Michigan Avenue should receive top priority for streetscape and lighting enhancement funds and serve as the location for a pilot lighting enhancement project. Additional lighting enhancement projects should follow for key Central Loop corridors including Randolph, Congress Wacker and LaSalle. **Goal: Complete by 2016**

8. Main Branch & South Branch Riverfront

Riverwalk improvements are envisioned to include a permanent public market (Hyatt area), underbridge connections at Michigan Avenue and Lake Shore Drive, several on-street connections, a dock level riverwalk, green space, and a vertical connection near Van Buren Street. **Goal: Complete all by 2016.**

CENTRAL LOOP

9. Grant Park & Central Station Railscape

Railscape improvements beginning in Grant Park going south to Museum Park would enhance the visual character of the area and create new park space near Roosevelt. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

10. Lakefront Transitway

The Lakefront Transitway would use an existing, improved right-of-way traveling north-south through Grant Park. This transit service would provide a connection to McCormick Place on the south and the Carroll Avenue Transitway on the north. In the Central Loop, the service would provide stops at major streets and connect with the East/West Transitway at Monroe Street. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

11. Expand Water Taxi Service

The Central Loop is currently well served by water taxi service, but improvements in coverage and service levels will be needed to support new development activity. Service options from the Central Loop will be expanded along the North and South Branches as developments are added along the River. **Goal: Complete by 2016.**

12. Pedestrian Bridges over River

Dedicated pedestrian bridges connecting the West Loop to the Central Loop and the Central Loop to Streeterville (over the Chicago River) would ease pedestrian congestion at key points in the area. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

13. Pedestrian Connection at Queen's Landing

Pedestrian mobility between Buckingham Fountain and the Lake will be restored. An at-grade street crossing is preferred, although a more expensive alternative could be the construction of a grade separated underpass at this location. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

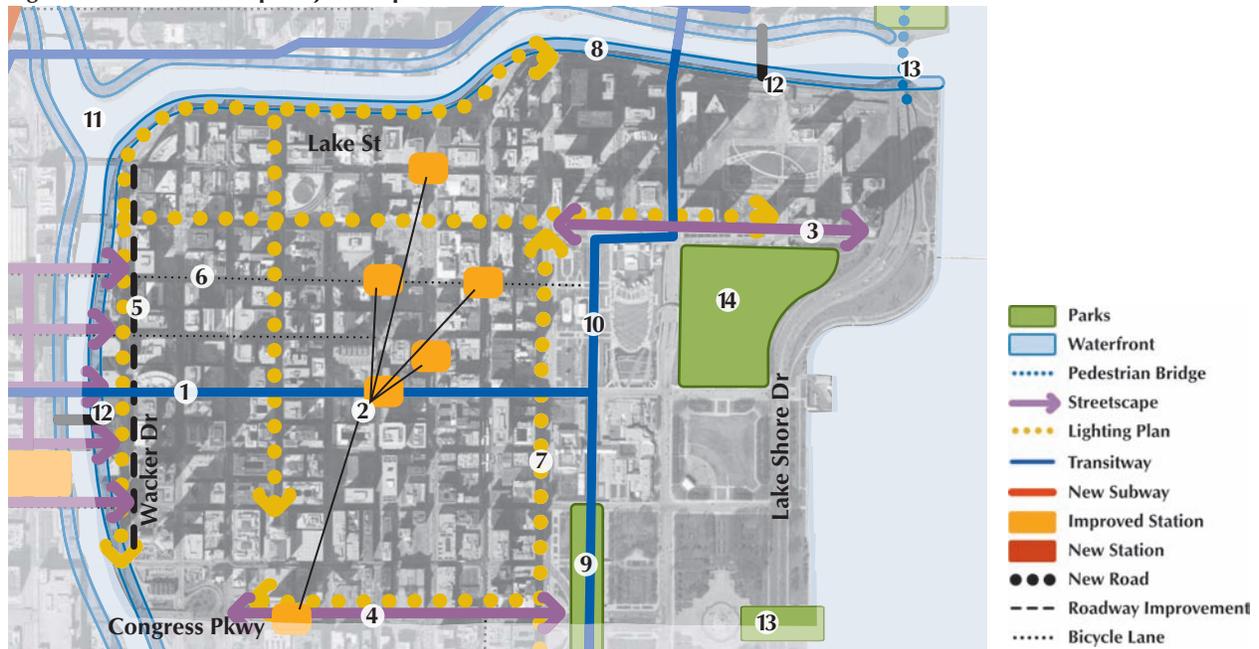
14. Grant Park Improvements North

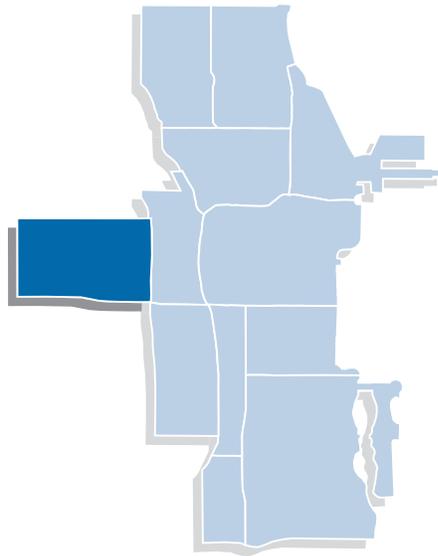
While the exact scope of this project has not yet been determined, the project will generally include reconstruction of the obsolete Monroe Street Garage and other public amenities associated with the garage structure. Open spaces and park facilities potentially effected by this project include Daley Bicentennial Plaza/Fieldhouse, Cancer Survivors Garden and "Peanut Park." **Goal: Complete by 2012.**



Image CL-13: Buckingham Fountain is an important Lakefront landmark, and pedestrian access across Lake Shore Drive will be restored.

Figure CL-3: Central Loop Project Map





Near West

Near West is bounded on the north by Lake Street, on the south by the Eisenhower Expressway, on the east by the Kennedy Expressway and on the west by Ashland Avenue. It represents an expansion of the original 2003 Central Area Plan boundaries westward to capture the significant levels of new growth.

Originally an industrial and warehouse district, the Near West now contains a mix of established residential neighborhoods alongside commercial and industrial uses. Two important restaurant districts are located at the eastern and northern edges of the subdistrict: Greektown located along Halsted and "Restaurant Row" along Randolph. The United Center, the city's largest indoor athletic and performance venue, lies just beyond the western boundary

NEAR WEST



Image NW-1: The Randolph corridor through the Near West has grown as a popular restaurant district.



Image NW-2: The Near West has recently experienced a surge in mid-rise condominium development.



Image NW-3: Planted medians have improved the street environment along Randolph.

Trends, 2000-2007

The Near West's 2000 population of 4,560 more than doubled by 2007 and reached an estimated 10,175 persons (6.1% of the Central Area's total population). New construction projects have followed pioneering adaptive-reuse residential projects.

While high-rise projects have been constructed along the Kennedy Expressway and Halsted Street, much of the Near West development has been in low-and mid-rise buildings.

New retail development, including a Dominick's Foods store in Greektown, supports the influx of residents.

Forecast, 2008-2020

With few remaining properties that have potential for residential adaptive-reuse, new residential development is occurring primarily on redevelopment sites. The 212-unit Emerald, for example, was recently built on the former site of the Chicago Christian Industrial League, which relocated to new facilities.

Larger Near West projects include VB1224, with 189 adaptive-reuse units, and 901 West Madison, with 148 new-construction units.

Increased demand for housing from the adjacent University of Illinois at Chicago campus and the Illinois Medical District is being met in the Near West with the 142-unit Automatic Lofts targeted to students and a wide range of other proposed residential projects. A retail project that includes a movie theater is proposed for the former Fannie May Candies factory site at 1137 West Jackson.

A new park at Adams and Sangamon Streets is in the design phase. It will address the need for additional recreation and open space.

2020 Vision/Goals

- In the Near West subdistrict, new development will step down in density from the high-density corridors in the West Loop along the Kennedy and Eisenhower expressways. Densities will be higher in the transition areas along Halsted

and Van Buren Streets.

- The interior portions of the subdistrict around Madison Street will be medium density and therefore consistent with the area's loft character.
- This district will continue to grow as a community of linked and distinct urban neighborhoods.
- New mixed-use developments will strengthen Madison Street and Halsted Street as the community's retail corridors serving the neighborhood as well as attracting City residents to its unique restaurants and shops.
- Existing industrial properties should be protected, although appropriate transitions to new uses should be allowed.
- The southwest portion of the Near West district around the University of Illinois at Chicago will remain a suitable location for institutional development.
- Public transportation offerings in the district will be improved to include new rail station(s) along existing lines and faster, more direct bus service into the West Loop and Central Loop.
- Pedestrian mobility to the West Loop will be enhanced through targeted improvements to the sidewalk environment of the streets that cross the Kennedy Expressway.

Policies & Actions

Financial / Incentive

- Central West and Near West TIF Districts will provide funding for Near West infrastructure.
- The Greektown Special Service Area (SSA) along Halsted Street should continue to fund sidewalk maintenance and other local projects and activities.

Regulatory

- Current C-zoning has brought ground-level retail but has not encouraged the emergence of a strong retail corridor. Halsted Street has sufficient residential density to support more retail space but flexibility may be needed on other streets.
- Densities should respect and

NEAR WEST

reflect the current character of the district, with taller buildings located on the east side of the district closer to the Kennedy Expressway and West Loop.

- Industrial retention policies should support existing businesses, although a Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) is not necessary.

Urban Design

Kennedy Corridor

The area along the Kennedy Expressway from Van Buren to Lake Street was studied in order to identify opportunities for pedestrian and vehicular mobility improvements, development considerations for expressway adjacent parcels and potentials for park development.

Urban design recommendations for this corridor include the following (see Figure NW-1 and Figure NW-2):

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- Pedestrian crossing of ramp intersections is a key safety concern. Improvements in crosswalk striping and utilization of an audible warning system are potential fea-

tures warranting further study.

- Landscape enhancements have been installed in several areas along the expressway, particularly at access ramp locations. This program should be continued and expanded.
- Regarding development, a rational massing strategy is identified that would provide visual continuity to expressway adjacent parcels. Recommendations include utilization of parking decks to establish regulating lines along the corridor and step-backs in building mass to frame the corridor.

Near West

The Near West subdistrict is one of the high growth areas within the Central Area. Development has consisted primarily of residential construction in mid-rise buildings and conversion of loft buildings. The Skybridge project is the first high-rise structure west of the Kennedy Expressway in the Central Area.

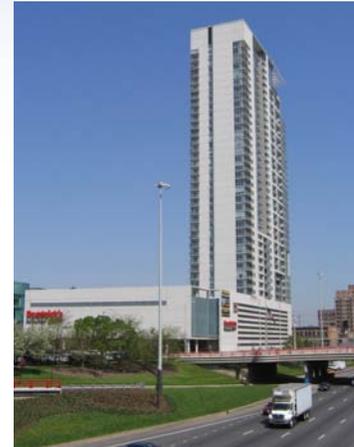


Image NW-4: The Skybridge development is the first skyscraper to be constructed west of the Kennedy Corridor.

Figure NW-2: Kennedy Corridor Urban Design Recommendations



Figure NW-1: Kennedy Corridor Section Detail



NEAR WEST



Image NW-5: The capping of the Kennedy Expressway would potentially provide needed open space for the Near West.



Image NW-6: The existing elevated tracks at Lake and Morgan have been identified as the site of a new CTA station.

A mix of office and residential projects are being proposed for the area close to Halsted Street. It is anticipated that taller buildings will be proposed for the subdistrict along the Kennedy Expressway. Taller buildings may also be appropriate on sites along the Eisenhower Expressway on the southern edge of the district and in the heart of the subdistrict as far west as Morgan where a new CTA green line station is proposed.

Near West Projects (see project map below)

1. CTA Infill Station (Morgan - Green/Pink Line)

An infill station on the elevated Green/Pink Line tracks along Lake Street will improve transit access to and from the Near West, where stations are currently spaced more than one mile apart. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

2. Kennedy Corridor Enhancements

Multi-phased I-90/94 Kennedy Corridor enhancements are proposed along the east/west corridors that connect the West Loop and Near West subdistricts. Improvements

include pedestrian safety and comfort features and the addition of trees and landscape features along ramp infrastructure. **Goal: Complete by 2012.**

3. Kennedy Corridor Cap

The creation of a major public park over the Kennedy Expressway is proposed for the area between Monroe and Washington Streets. This cap would provide much needed green space to serve office and adjacent residential development, and it would provide improved linkage between the West Loop and Near West subdistricts. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

4. Bicycle Lanes & Markings

A new bicycle lane is planned for Halsted and will complement the existing bicycle lanes along Washington and Jackson. **Goal: Complete by 2020.**

Figure NW-3: Near West Projects

- Parks
- Waterfront
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Streetscape
- Lighting Plan
- Transitway
- New Subway
- Improved Station
- New Station
- New Road
- Roadway Improvement
- Bicycle Lane

